



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# VETERANS COMMITTED TO VETERANS

DAV Chapter 1 of Sioux Falls, DAV Chapter 11 of Whitewood, DAV Oahe Chapter #18 of Pierre, American Legion Post 121 of McLaughlin, and the Minnekahta Quilters Guild of Hot Springs are not going to wait until the shovels are in the ground and soil is turned for the new veterans home.

As champions of the construction of the new home, they have presented monetary contributions to the staff of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to be used to furnish the respective rooms. Signage will be displayed honoring those service organizations that have contributed.

Those interested in contributing to the furnishing of the rooms are encouraged to contact Larry Wilcox, Superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—1-800-502-8999.

### ***Inside this issue:***

28th SDNG Legislative Dining Out	2-3
Johnson joins Department Team	4
935th Alerted for Deployment	5
Upcoming Events	5



## SDNG HOSTS 28TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE DINING OUT

The South Dakota National Guard hosted the 2012 Legislative Dining-Out at the Ramkota in Pierre, Thursday, Feb. 9. This annual tradition has brought Guardsmen and the state Legislature together for a formal evening for the last 28 years, but the tradition of the dining-out and/or dining-in date back much further.

"The Guard is an organization that is rich in history and tradition," said Maj. Corey Norris, SDNG legislative liaison officer. "This event provides the Guard an opportunity to honor the legislators by hosting them at a traditional military event where we highlight our significant accomplishments to the community, state and nation." The atmosphere, while formal, includes deep-rooted traditions which lighten the mood and provide both members and guests not only plenty of laughs, but a chance to learn some of the organizations history and traditions and an opportunity to recognize individual and/or unit achievements.

The Legislature was also shown a video highlighting 2011 and the many accomplishments made by the men and women of the SDNG. "Last summer 1,957 of our Soldiers and Airmen were activated in response to the Missouri River floods and we provided support in Pierre, Fort Pierre and the Dakota Dunes areas for nearly 100 continuous days," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. "We currently have more than 500 Soldiers and Airmen serving overseas while others are preparing to deploy in the months and years ahead. I couldn't be prouder of the accomplishments of our Soldiers and Airmen. Their dedicated service truly makes a difference around the world and at home." In addition to the many SDNG accomplishments highlighted during the night, the Guard also recognized a family, employer and public servant with an award for their contributions to the SDNG mission.

The awards portion of the dining-out began by presenting the REI Corporation with the 2012 South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award. The Pro Patria Award is presented to the one employer in their state who has provided the most exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. REI Corporation is an Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) contract manufacturer located on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. REI is a tribally-owned business employing approximately 10 people, including Staff Sgt. Gabe Doney, the operations manager for REI Corporation and a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 451st Firefighting Team located in Sturgis. REI Corporation was recognized for their outstanding contributions to the state and nation's military services. Their leadership exemplifies the patriotic spirit that is alive and well here in our great state of South Dakota.



(continued on next page)

## SDNG HOSTS 28TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE DINING OUT (CONTINUED)

The SDNG next awarded the 2012 Williamson Militiaman Award to U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson. The Williamson Militiaman Award was established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson (retired) to recognize an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of our country. Throughout his political career, Sen. Johnson has fought for the benefits, equipment, and facilities needed to ensure the success of the National Guard at home and on the battlefields abroad. As a leading voice for over 34 years in both the state and federal government on veteran and service member issues, Senator Johnson has consistently demonstrated why he is deserving of the 2012 Williamson Militiaman Award. Past recipients of the award include: Former Adjutants General Phil Killey and Harold Sykora, former U.S. Sen. Tom Daschle and former Governors William J. Janklow and M. Michael Rounds.

To conclude the awards portion of the evening Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch awarded the 2012 Adjutant General's Family Award to Kristine Juelfs of Fort Pierre. "As the adjutant general, I recognize the vital importance of our families to the success of our National Guard mission," Reisch said during the award presentation. "The goal of this award is to recognize those family members who support their service members in an exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices." Kristine is married to Sgt. Anson Juelfs, a member of the SDNG's 200th Engineer Company. Sgt. Juelfs and the rest of the multi-role bridging company headquartered out of Pierre, with detachments in Chamberlain and Mobridge, was activated for deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, May 14, 2011. The 200th is currently serving on their year-long deployment where they are maintaining, repairing and replacing existing military bridges in Afghanistan.

Following the awards ceremony and bringing the evening to a close, Gov. Dennis Daugaard addressed the Soldiers, Airmen in attendance. Daugaard specifically thanked Guard members for their effort during the Missouri River flooding and for their continuous support on mission both at home and abroad. Maj. Gen. Reisch presented Governor Daugaard with a personalized Army Combat Uniform jacket.





## JOHNSON JOINS SD DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY

Sonja Johnson has been named the director of the South Dakota National Guard Museum.

The National Guard Museum, located in Pierre, South Dakota, was established to provide a facility for memorabilia and historical documents pertaining to the South Dakota National Guard. The museum is a repository of historical information for both the Army and Air National Guard. The museum originated as the 147th Field Artillery Historical Society in 1975. In 1983, the South Dakota Legislature put forth legislation to create an official South Dakota National Guard Museum and place its control under the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The mission of the National Guard Museum is to acquire, preserve, protect, and display military equipment, records, relics, and memorabilia representing the heritage of the Dakota Militia and the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard. Sonja noted that, "history is dead only if we allow it to die." Johnson would like to see the museum become a living history. Johnson said, "the artifacts need to be connected to people, places and events — everything has a story to tell. Only when we preserve the story can we pass them along to future generations."

Deputy Secretary Harding notes that, "one of the goals of the museum is to educate National Guard members and the general public about the heritage of the South Dakota National Guard. With the South Dakota National Guard celebrating their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Johnson will have numerous opportunities to cultivate interests in this rich history and to document our story."

Sonja has a strong commitment to South Dakota and a rich background of our military. Sonja's parents were born and raised in Faith and Kadoka. Sonja's father was active duty and currently serves in the Iowa National Guard. Sonja's two sisters also served on active duty. Johnson noted that while her father was on active duty, the family traveled with him. Her father was a big history buff and as such their family toured every military base, cemetery, and museum within the respective areas.

Johnson currently serves as the unit supply sergeant with the 200th bridging company in Pierre. She is married and has two young daughters.



## SD GUARD UNIT ALERTED FOR DEPLOYMENT

The South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 1, Company B, 935th Support Battalion has been put on alert for deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 935th, of Rapid City, and its 33 assigned members are tentatively scheduled for deployment in May.

The mission of the 935th is to provide aviation maintenance and repair support to aircraft armament and avionics equipment, and will provide this support to a combat aviation brigade. The unit specializes in maintenance and repair of rotary-wing aircraft to include the UH-60 Black Hawk, OH-58 Kiowa, and other U.S. Army rotary aircraft.

The unit is expected to report to an active-duty mobilization station to complete all required training prior to deployment overseas. This is the second mobilization for the 935th. They deployed to Iraq in 2004-2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



## Upcoming Events

Mar. 7—VABHHCS Veterans Creative Arts Show—Fort Meade

Mar. 19—VABHHCS Veterans Creative Arts Show—Hot Springs

Apr. 27-29—VABHHCS Women's Retreat—Fort Meade

May 21-22—South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting—Pierre

Aug. 27-29—VSO Annual Benefits School—Pierre

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Soldiers and Sailors Building  
425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)  
Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

